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FM AMEMBASSY CONAKRY  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2549  
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/21/2018  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [ASEC](#) [GV](#)  
SUBJECT: CLOSE FRIEND OF NEW PM SHARES INSIGHTS

REF: CONAKRY 0209

Classified By: POL/ECON CHIEF SHANNON CAZEAU FOR REASON 1.4 B AND D

11. (C) Returning to Conakry from a trip to Middle Guinea, Econoff stopped in Mamou on May 21 to visit the local prefect, Mr. Safioulaye Bah, in order to discuss recent political developments (reftel). Bah told Econoff that he is a close personal friend of the new prime minister, Dr. Ahmed Tidiane Souare. He said that they had worked together as civil servants in the Ministry of Finance, and that Souare was close to Bah's father, a respected imam from Labe. Bah added that Souare was a frequent guest for dinner at Bah's personal residence when they were working together.

12. (S) According to the prefect, Souare's appointment as PM represents a big step backwards. Shaking his head, he told Econoff, "it is really too bad," as he described Souare as a Conte loyalist. Bah said he is certain that Souare will quickly dismiss the ministers of interior and security, commerce, education, and mines, because all of them are known to be staunch supporters of Kouyate. He added that the litmus test for the new cabinet will be whether or not cabinet members are loyal to Conte. If they are not, Bah told Econoff that they will be dismissed.

13. (C) Even though Bah was appointed by Kouyate in July 2007, he told Econoff that he is not worried about his own job because of his close personal connection with Souare. However, he said that it is likely many, if not most, of the governors and prefects will be replaced.

14. (S) Based on his personal knowledge of Souare, Bah said that the new PM will not support the National Independent Election Commission (CENI) and that there probably won't be any elections until the presidential elections in 2010. Furthermore, he said that Souare will not support the National Commission of Inquiry into the alleged human rights abuses committed by security forces during the civil unrest in 2007. Bah added that Souare is unlikely to pursue any reforms related to mining contracts, and will probably not pursue any of the findings detailed in the recent ministerial audits.

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COMMENT  
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15. (C) Embassy considers Mr. Bah an excellent contact who is well educated and intellectually thoughtful about Guinea's political and economic situation. At the same time, Bah's views on the new PM are decidedly slanted, which raises questions about a possible personal bias. Nonetheless, Bah's views provide an interesting perspective from someone who claims to know the new PM very well. The accuracy of Bah's predictions will be demonstrated in the weeks and months to come. END COMMENT.

